



Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

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United Kingdom

Grain and Feed

Harvest Update

2002

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Report Highlights:

Following the release of England's June Census data, post has revised its crop areas such that the 2002 UK wheat harvest is now forecast at 16.55 MMT and that for barley at 6.2 MMT. The less than favorable weather in recent weeks sparked initial concern among growers and traders alike. However, the wheat crop is generally described as having stood up well and strong export hopes remain. Early indications are that the barley quality is more mixed.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
London [UK1], UK

On August 16, the UK Government's (HMG) Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) released the first provisional results from the June 2002 Agricultural and Horticultural Census for England. Provisional June Census data for Northern Ireland will be published later this month while that for Scotland and Wales will be published in September. That said, based on the area data contained in the England numbers, post has revised both its wheat and barley areas down 55,000 hectares to 2.015 and 1.1 million hectares, respectively. With yield expectations unchanged, the wheat harvest is now forecast at 16.55 MMT (previously 17 MMT) and the barley harvest at 6.2 MMT (previously 6.5 MMT). As further provisional census data and then final census data become available, further revisions to the crop forecasts may be necessary.

Following the rains earlier this month, the UK is now enjoying a dry spell and the wheat harvest is well under way. The rains had increased quality fears among growers and traders alike but it is now becoming clear that while some wheats in some areas did suffer (particularly in Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and North Norfolk), elsewhere quality and yield is holding up well. The large size of the forecast crop means that traders remain hopeful that there will be sufficient grain to mix and match for export, meaning that exports of 4MMT plus remain a very real possibility. This positive attitude has been further buoyed in recent days by negative news vis a vis the U.S., Canadian, Australian and German wheat crops. Hopes are that the UK will be able to compete with French wheat whose quality, so far, is reported as the best for several years. That all said, it remains early days and many in the trade persistently refuse to budge from their variable crop talk. Although much depends on the weather over the next few days, over 50 percent of the crop is expected to have been harvested by the end of this week and the overall picture should start to become a little clearer.

The winter barley harvest is just about finished. According to a survey conducted by the HGCA, UK winter barley quality is below the three year average with lower specific weight, higher nitrogen content, low-medium moisture levels and higher screenings. Spring barley quality on the other hand seems to have come through the recent wet weather comparatively unscathed. As with the wheat, only time will tell.